

Message Text

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62

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

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SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION GROWTH

REF: (A) CONAKRY 0411, (B) STATE 047640, (C) STATE 301427

1. GUINEAN POPULATION WAS ESTIMATED BY THE UN IN 1973 AT 4.21 MILLION, INCREASING AT A RATE OF 2.3 PERCENT ANNUALLY. GUINEAN ESTIMATED ARE USUALLY HIGHER, IN DECEMBER 1975 THE GOG REPORTED FIVE MILLION. GOG REPORTS DENSITY AS 21 PERSONS PER HECTARE. (810 PER SQ MILE) APART FROM THESE STATISTICS THERE IS LITTLE DATA AVAILABLE TO DESCRIBE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN GUINEA'S DEVELOPMENT.

2. WHATEVER GUINEA'S TRUE POPULATION, A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT COMPLICATION IS THE NUMBER OF GUINEANS RESIDING ABROAD, BOTH FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS, IN VOLUNTARY EXILE. IF MOST OF THESE (ESTIMATED 1 MILLION) SHOULD SUDDENLY RETURN FOLLOWING INTERNAL POLITICAL CHANGES, GUINEA MIGHT SUDDENLY BE CONFRONTED WITH AN ACUTE PROBLEM.

3. GOG VIEWS POPULATION GROWTH AS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND ANY ATTEMPT TO LIMIT THAT GROWTH AS AN IMPERIALIST DESIRE TO DOMINATE THE THIRD WORLD. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE BUCHAREST POPULATION CONFERENCE IN AUGUST 1974, THE GUINEAN DELEGATE CHARGED

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THAT "IMPERIALISM DOESN'T ONLY WANT A DECREASE IN THE

BIRTH RATE; IT IS UNDER-POPULATION THAT IT WANTS.. IT EVEN WISHES IN ITS DEEPER GOALS TO INCREASE THE DEATH RATE."

WITHIN THE COUNTRY, GOVERNMENT POLICY IS THAT GUINEA, LACKING IN CAPITAL AND MODERN TECHNIQUES, AND NEEDING A YOUNG AND DYNAMIC POPULATION FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT TASKS, MUST INCREASE ITS POPULATION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND LOWER THE DEATH RATE, WHILE TRAINING THESE NEW CITIZENS, BOTH POLITICALLY AND TECHNICALLY, TO CREATE A DEVELOPED SOCIETY.

PRESSURES FROM POPULATION GROWTH, AS THEIR DELEGATE TO THE CONFERENCE DECLARED, ARE THE RESULT OF FOREIGN DOMINATION AND EXPLOITATION; THESE PRESSURES DO NOT EXIST IN THEIR IMAGE OF A WELL-PLANNED SOCIALIST SOCIETY. SINGLING OUT DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IS TO OVERLOOK THIS BASIC PROBLEM WHICH LIES AT THE ROOT OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT. THIS POINT OF VIEW WAS RECENTLY REAFFIRMED IN A RADIO EDITORIAL WHICH SAID THE QUESTION IS NOT TO CURB POPULATION GROWTH BUT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GUINEA'S CLIMATIC RICHNESS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF ARABLE LAND REDUCE THE PRESSURE PRODUCED BY ITS DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH. THE IMPORTANT FACTOR REMAINS THE MOVE TO THE CITIES. THROUGH A VARIETY OF MEASURES, SUCH AS THE CREATION OF "SOCIALIST CITIES" AND OTHER MODERN COLLECTIVE AGRICULTURAL UNITS, THE GOG IS TRYING TO LIMIT URBAN INFLUX. IF THESE MEASURES ARE EFFECTIVE, THE RURAL POPULATION CAN MAINTAIN ITS SELF-SUFFICIENCY EVEN WITH INCREASED POPULATION. IN THE CITIES, WHICH SUFFER FROM FOOD SHORTAGES, ANY POPULATION AGGRAVATES THE STRAIN ON GUINEA'S ABILITY TO DISTRIBUTE FOOD AND REQUIRES RECOURSE TO OUTSIDE AID (PRIMARILY PL 480 FOOD SHIPMENTS FROM U.S.) OVERALL, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS LESS HAMPERED BY THE GROWTH IN POPULATION THAN BY ECONOMIC POLICY. ALTHOUGH POPULATION GROWTH TENDS TO CREATE A DRAG ON DEVELOPMENT, GIVEN GUINEA'S PRESENT RESOURCES AND POTENTIAL, A SATISFACTORY RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH COULD BE ACHIEVED DESPITE GUINEA'S INCREASING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POPULATION.

5. NO INVOLVEMENT BY THE U.S. OR BY MULTI-LATERAL DONORS IN POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAMS CAN BE FORESEEN UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CHANGE ITS POLICY, WHICH IS UNLIKELY.
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